



## Measuring what it takes to retain Talent

In a recent speech at the Coast Guard Academy, the Commandant stressed the important influence of positive leadership on the retention of our talented "heroes." He also reminded us that anyone can be a hero at any moment, so retaining every qualified member or employee is a clear responsibility of all leaders and supervisors. Retention is growing in importance-and not just because we're having some retention problems right now. Retaining our trained and experienced workforce is the quickest and most effective way to slow down the turbulence caused by the vicious cycle of *loss-replacement-advancement-accession-reassignment-loss* that is reducing the experience level of the workforce and making it difficult to make logical career plans.

A necessary component of retaining people is finding out why they are leaving or planning to leave. But our experience is that it doesn't do much good to *only* ask those who are leaving for their opinions. What if people who are staying are equally dissatisfied with some particular benefit or policy? What we need to do is find out why people leave, why they decide *not* to leave, and make sure we work to keep both. It might very well be better to strengthen even more the reasons why people choose to stay, rather than "fixing" reasons why people leave.

Long demanded by leaders and people working in all aspects of human resources, our technology finally supports the launch of a web-based *Career Intentions Survey*. ALCOAST 064/01 (20 Feb) announced the program. We believe that by examining the factors that differentiate those who stay from those who leave we can make better policy decisions, and better decisions on which benefits, worklife practices, and elements of compensation are most important to people and thereby indicating what is most important to "go after" in the budget process.

We want everyone who is leaving the Coast Guard to fill out the survey. Why would anyone who has chosen to leave (or been asked to leave) bother? Because our research tells us that most people who leave identify strongly with the missions of the Coast Guard, and want it to succeed. They will also leave behind many friends and shipmates ... why not try to make the Coast Guard a better place for them? Besides, this is like voting ... if you don't vote your voice is never heard.

For people who are staying, but meet the conditions below, that vote is even more personal. They may have been asked to fill out this survey because they are at a transition point in their career. They may have just entered or been hired by the Coast Guard. They could be leaving or transferring from one component to another. They may have just completed some training or education, or be returning from temporary duty. They may have been promoted or reassigned. Whatever the reason this is a chance for people to take stock-to reflect on their experiences so far, and to look ahead at their expectations about a career with the Coast Guard.

A person who is not leaving the Coast Guard, and who has filled out this survey in the last six months need not fill it out again even if he or she meets a condition below, though they can if they want to. We ask that a person leaving the Coast Guard fill out the survey even if they have filled it out in the recent past. The events that trigger a person being asked to fill out the survey are:

Graduating from recruit training

Graduating from OCS

Commissioning from Academy, MARAD

Graduating from A-school

Returning from advanced or graduate training

Returning from senior service school

Transferring (PCS) or if civilian, accepting another position (not a promotion)

Advancing, promoting, accepting a warrant, accepting a commission

Returning from any TAD longer than 6 weeks (other than training)

Returning from a detail (civilian)

Executing an EAD contract (reserve)

Completing Active Duty for Training (reserve)

Completing ADSW (AC or RC) (reserve)

Release from active duty with transfer to reserve

Leaving active military to become a civilian employee of the CG

Leaving reserve military to become a civilian employee of the CG

Leaving a civilian job with CG to become a CG active duty member

Leaving a civilian job with the CG to become a CG reservist

Retiring from the service or civil service

Leaving the Coast Guard to pursue education

Leaving the Coast Guard for private sector employment

Leaving the Coast Guard for work in another agency (civilian)

Leaving government service (civilian)

Discharge (administrative)

Discharge (medical)

The link to the survey is: <http://cgweb.uscg.mil/g-w/hrsystems/surveys/cover-intro.html>.

Special arrangements can be made for those units/members without CG intranet connectivity. Contact the Future Force 21 Team by email at [ff21@uscg.mil](mailto:ff21@uscg.mil), subject: Intent Survey, or call (202)267-0624/0630.

I hope all members who are staying with the Coast Guard will think of this as an investment of 20 minutes in their future; and that those who are leaving will consider it an opportunity to help us understand why. Thanks!

Regards, FL Ames

The latest issue of The Leadership News is on the Web at: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/news/winter00/>. Articles include a summary of the Leadership Forum held at the Coast Guard Academy last fall, the newly created leadership course for civilian employees and a success story from a Welfare to Work program participant -- and others. Check it out!



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